Global recession and tourist arrival

223. SHRI M. V. MYSURA REDDY: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the number of foreign tourists to the country has not come down due to global recession last year, but the number has come down after the Mumbai attack; and

(b) if so, how Government is planning to address the issue and what measures have been taken or proposed to take to improve tourism in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRIES OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH): (a) and (b) Though the growth rate in Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in 2008 over 2007 was lower (5.6%) as compared to that of 14.3% in 2007 over 2006, the total number of FTAs in 2008 was 5.37 million which is higher than the FT As of 5.08 million in 2007. The lower growth rate in 2008, particularly in November and December, may be due to various reasons including global financial meltdown and terrorist activities. To minimize the negative impact of recent terrorist attacks in the country, Ministry of Tourism has taken the following steps:-

- All States have been requested to beef up security measures in hotels and at tourist sites in their respective States;
- Indiatourism offices overseas are in regular contact with the international media and travel trade to keep them updated on the ground situation in the country.
- Familiarsation Tours for trade and media representatives to Mumbai and other regions of the country have been specially organized to project the ground realities relating to safety/ security conditions in the country. Trade/ Media representatives from USA, UK, Ireland, France, Germany, Austria, Netherlands, Argentina, Mexico, South Africa, Japan, Malaysia and Singapore have visited India during the months of December 2008 and January 2009 as a result of this initiative.

Development of tourism in Punjab

224. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the proposals submitted by State Government of Punjab and other agencies for the development of Tourism in the State, still pending with the Central Government for clearance;

(b) the details of each proposal and by when each of them is expected to be cleared; and

(c) the financial assistance or loans granted for Punjab for the development of tourism in the State during the last three years ending 31 December, 2008 with details of their utilization?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, extends Central Financial Assistance under its various Plan Schemes, to the proposals received from the State Governments/ Union Territory Administrations, which are complete in all respects as per the scheme guidelines subject to availability of funds.